

## **They Were Roommates Who Were Fake Dating by inawaragainstreality**

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**Summary:**

Eddie needs a place to live and Richie has an empty room.

Eddie needs a date to an event the Losers are putting on and Richie's free.

It's just three of the best cliches rolled into one because why not?

Roommates + Fake Dating + Oh no! There's only one bed!

# 1. Chapter 1

Eddie stood outside the E7 apartment. He could do this. All he had to do was knock and interview with the guy on the other side. He'd texted the guy to let him know he was going to be a few minutes late, but the guy never responded. Judging Eddie's luck, he had already given the spare room away and didn't want to deal with the uncomfortable conversation of telling Eddie.

Eddie knocked softly. There wasn't any noise on the other side of the room. He knocked again; this time louder. It sounded like something got knocked over and then the person on the other side of the door swore. *Way to start the interview off right, Eddie.*

The front door swung open revealing one of the cutest guys Eddie had ever seen. He wasn't wearing a shirt and his hair looked like he'd just woken up. Judging by the confused look in his perfect blue eyes, he'd forgotten about the interview.

"Do I have the wrong day?" Eddie asked, pulling out his phone.

Eddie glanced up in time to see the guy push his glasses up so he could rub the sleep out of his eyes. "For?"

"We were supposed to meet about your extra room?"

The guy groaned. "Fuuuuccckkkk. What day is it?" The guy stepped back so Eddie could walk into the apartment. "This whole week I've been off. I thought that was tomorrow."

Eddie stepped into the apartment, looking around. He'd expected it to be a lot worse, to be honest. It was a little messy, but the guy probably would have picked up had he remembered. Eddie turned around when he heard the door close.

"I'm sorry. Eddie, right?" Eddie nodded. "Uh, I'm Richie. But you probably remembered that."

"Do you want me to come back later?"

"No, you're fine. Why don't you look around, I'm just going to go

change.”

Richie ducked into his room, leaving Eddie alone. The apartment really wasn't that big, just a simple to bedroom. He wasn't really thinking about the rooms as he walked around though. He was thinking about Richie in the next room. He really shouldn't be roommates with someone he was attracted to, but he really needed an apartment. Every one he'd seen had been completely disgusting or the people he'd be living with were insane.

“So, I'm new to this whole, interviewing people. I guess I can just tell you about myself. I'm a student, but I'm also in a band, so sometimes I practice here. I work at a radio station in the morning, so I get back around seven. I don't usually have people over, except my bandmates. Just so you know what you might be getting into.” Richie flashed him a nervous smile.

Eddie debated not telling Richie that much about him, but this was better than the usual question and answer he'd been dealing with. “I'm also a student, I just work at a coffee shop. I'm not really a morning person, so we probably wouldn't run into each other. I'm not a party person and most of my friends live pretty far away. I just transferred here. So, why are you looking for a new roommate?”

Richie shifted on his feet, looking uncomfortable. “I was living with my girlfriend and we broke up. I wasn't going to get a roommate, but financially it made more sense.”

Eddie could tell there was something more to the story but decided not to push it. Especially since he had his own story. He'd transferred from his previous college where most of his friends were because they had a better program here. While he didn't transfer for his boyfriend, he'd planned on moving in with him. That was until he'd broken up with Eddie and then went off the radar.

They asked each other a few questions and Eddie was surprised by how calm he was. He would have expected to be nervous but talking to Richie was easy. Eddie half wished he didn't have to go to work so he could continue to talk to him.

“I was supposed to meet with someone else, but, if you want to move

in, you've got the room."

A week later Eddie was moved in and adjusting to living with Richie.

## 2. Chapter 2

There were four things Eddie was sure of after a week of living with Richie. One, the disheveled hair wasn't because he'd just woken up. Apparently, Richie had hair that permanently looked messy. Like someone had just been running their hands through it, pulling at it. It took most of Eddie's self-control not to be that person.

Two, Richie was actually really talented. When he'd said he was in a band, Eddie assumed it was just something a few friends and him did. But they had a fairly large following and had several albums. Eddie hadn't been able to see them perform yet, but he'd listened to all of their songs on repeat and loved them. That, and his radio show was hilarious. Whenever Eddie had to wake up for work, he listened. Richie was charming and funny. It made Eddie's morning whenever he listened.

Three, Eddie didn't believe Richie could cook a healthy meal if someone paid him. Whenever Eddie came home, he was eating take out or frozen food. Eddie had been cooking something one day when Richie came in and Eddie had given him some. Richie had acted like he'd never eaten before because he liked it so much.

Four, Eddie was screwed. He would have thought that after his boyfriend broke up with him, he wouldn't have felt that way about anyone for a while. But here he was, caring way too much about his roommate. His roommate that laughed too loud, left dishes in the sink for too long, made Eddie smile just by walking into the room, and complained about Eddie's music choice.

He was making dinner while listening to Richie's band. Usually he wouldn't listen to it without headphones in the apartment because he didn't want Richie to think he was weird or get uncomfortable. He started mumbling the lyrics aloud, not thinking about it.

"Maybe you should be our new front man."

Eddie jumped, nearly stabbing himself with the knife he was holding. He whipped around to see Richie leaning against the door smirking. Of course, he looked casually amazing. He was supposed to be at

practice for another two hours.

“What are you doing back so early?”

“Paul, our drummer, was sick, so we decided to head home. Are you making something with enough for two? I can help.”

“Think you can handle dicing an onion.”

“There’s a lot I can handle Eddie Spaghetti.” Richie winked before taking the knife from Eddie.

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“Just admit it,” Richie laughed, pointing his fork at Eddie.

“I already said your band was pretty good.”

Eddie refused to tell Richie just how much he’d enjoyed his music though. Especially his favorite song, which was a slow song that was mainly Richie’s vocals. Richie was trying to get Eddie to say they were his favorite band as well as which song was his favorite.

Eddie grabbed his and Richie’s empty plates and took them to the sink. It was mainly a distraction. He’d spent the majority of dinner trying not to stare at Richie and get rid of the thoughts flying through his head. How he wanted to push those stupid glasses off his face and mess up his hair more. How he wanted to kiss that cocky grin off his face and make him shut up. Eddie grabbed the edge of the sink, taking a deep breath before he started washing the dishes.

He’d only been living with Richie for one week and he already felt this way. Even with his ex, Eddie never really felt how he did about Richie. It was easy being around him. Eddie didn’t feel like he had to pretend to be someone he wasn’t or constantly think about his next words. Yeah, he was definitely screwed.

“You okay, Eds?” Richie asked, walking up behind Eddie.

Richie reached around him to put his cup in the sink. Eddie jumped when he realized how close Richie was standing to him. He dropped the knife he’d been holding, trying to focus. Something that became

increasingly difficult whenever Richie got close to him. The water was starting to turn red. How did he not noticed he'd cut his hand?

"Shit," Richie grabbed Eddie's hand, turning him away from the sink. Eddie jerked his hand away. "That's pretty deep, let me help."

"It's not that bad, thanks though," Eddie murmured. He knew it was bad, but he didn't need Richie to be caring and helpful on top of every other thing he was.

"I've been trained in CPR; I know that's bad and I can help."

Eddie rolled his eyes. "Next time I'm choking on something, I'll be sure you're there." Richie raise his eyebrow at his choice of words.

Eddie wished Richie wasn't standing so close so he could hide his blush. He pushed passed Richie and went to the bathroom. He bandaged up his hand, taking a few seconds to splash some water on his face. *Get it together, Kaspbrak*. Eddie checked to make sure Richie wasn't outside the bathroom before rushing to his room. He did not need to see Richie again tonight. He'd just finishing cleaning in the morning.

Eddie didn't really sleep that night he just kept trying to reason why he couldn't keep spending time with Richie. Because he knew Richie wouldn't like him other than a friend. Then things would be awkward, and Eddie would be in the same place he was two weeks ago. Trying to find a place to live while trying to get over someone.

### 3. Chapter 3

When Eddie woke up the next morning, he didn't get out of bed until he heard Richie leave for the day. The apartment was spotless, Richie must have cleaned after Eddie ran out. Part of him felt guilty, but things probably would have gotten really bad if he hadn't left.

He glanced at the time and realized he was going to be late to work. He quickly showered and got dress before running to work. Eddie got there with two minutes to spare. His coworker started laughing when he saw his frazzled state.

"Rough morning?"

"Rough morning, rough week, rough year."

"I could give you a shot, but it's just espresso."

Eddie loved working with Carla. They were work friends and didn't feel the need to change that. Whenever the other came in in a bad mood they just joked around to take the others mind of it. They never had in depth conversations.

The shop was empty today. Eddie was grateful because he wasn't sure he could interact with a bunch of customers today. If one more person tried to tell him the difference between a latte and a cappuccino, he might throw one of both into their faces.

"My friend introduced me to this band. The singer is, holy shit, even if he couldn't sing, I'd still love him. Well not love but we try to be PG in this lovely establishment. Do you mind if I play their music?" Carla asked.

If Eddie had known that it was Richie's band, he probably would have said no. He really wasn't going to avoid Richie as easily as he thought. He let Carla know he was taking his break before he slipped into the back room to call Bev.

"EDDIE!" Bev yelled. There was a shuffling noise. "Sorry, I was studying with the guys. What's up?"



“I just miss you. All of you.”

Eddie jumped on the counter in the back. He'd forgotten how much he missed spending his time with the Losers. Usually he saw them every day, but with moving he hadn't had time to call them as much as he wanted.

“We miss you too! But how's California? It must be so nice. Obviously, Maine's still shit. It's always cold here. I'd kill for some sunlight.”

“Well you guys could always come to California!”

“Maybe that'll be the group trip next year.”

Eddie froze. He'd forgotten about that. When Eddie told the others he was moving, they'd decided they'd all meet up once a year. No matter where they went, they would spend time together. Because Eddie was the only one not in Maine, he'd said he'd fly home. The problem was Eddie had planned to come back with Myron, his now ex. The ex he hadn't told the others was an ex.

“We're all excited to meet the guy that you totally didn't move to California for!”

He should have told them. What was he going to do in two months? He couldn't show up without someone because that would ruin things they had planned. But if he'd told them they would have tried to convince him to stay. He'd also been embarrassed by the whole thing. Eddie had gone on about how much he liked Myron and how everyone was going to love him.

“Eddie? Is everything okay?”

“Yes, sorry. Just thinking. My break's almost over though, so I'll talk to you later.”

Eddie hung up, setting the phone next to him. He had several options. He could finally tell them the truth. Whatever Bev had planned it probably wouldn't be ruined if he didn't bring someone. It might be awkward, but he was used to third wheeling one the other Loser's dates. He could just not go, but then he'd feel guilty and

everyone would think something was wrong. Or he could hope to be dating someone that would like to go on a trip with him in two months.

Eddie walked back into the main part of the store and head Carla laughing. She was leaning forward towards the customer, absentmindedly playing with her hair. Eddie rolled his eyes. She was always trying to flirt with customers. Usually it didn't bother him. Except now it was Richie.

"Eddie, why didn't you tell me you were roommates with *the* Richie Tozier." Carla's eyes didn't leave Richie.

Eddie didn't have an answer. He should have said something when she first played their music. "I asked Eddie not to tell people. I like to keep a low profile."

Richie was no longer looking at Carla. Eddie shifted uncomfortably under his gaze. "Did Carla manage to take your order?"

"No, but why don't you surprise me with something?" Eddie went to grab a to-go cup. "For here."

He glanced at Richie. Eddie knew he was up to something but wasn't sure what. The shop was still empty, so he was grateful for something to do. Carla seemed equally grateful that she could continue to flirt with Richie. Either Richie was terrible at flirting or he was not interested in Carla. Eddie set the latte in front of Richie.

"Carla," Eddie said, taking Richie's card. "Aren't you supposed to take a break soon?"

That was the wrong thing to say. He'd been hoping she would go in the back, but she spent the entire fifteen minutes trying to impress Richie. Eddie was trying to distract himself. He shouldn't feel a surge of jealousy every time Richie laughed or how he was leaning closer to her the longer the conversation went on. He shouldn't because Richie was just his roommate. His roommate he'd only known for a week.

Eddie expected Richie to leave when Carla's break was over or when he finished his coffee. He didn't. Eddie couldn't concentrate. He felt

like Richie was watching him. *Only two hours Kaspbrak. You've got this.*

That may have been the longest two hours of his life. Carla had to start making people's drinks because he kept messing up. But he made it without completely losing his mind. Carla was doing a double, so he didn't have to hear her gush about Richie in the back room. He rushed out of the shop, not bothering to see if Richie was following.

"For someone so short you walk pretty quick," Richie laughed.

Eddie slowed down. Part of him wanted to take off running. If Richie hadn't gotten Carla's number, he'd probably ask Eddie for it. And because Eddie had no reason not to, he'd give it to Richie. Richie stepped ahead of Eddie, turning to walk backwards as he talked to Eddie.

"Carla seems nice." Eddie hummed in response. "Are you mad at me? Because I'm not really sure why you won't look at me Eds."

"Don't call me that." Richie stopped him. "Why'd you spend the afternoon at the coffee shop I work at?"

"I like coffee."

"A lot of places serve coffee. I also happen to know you were at practice. So, you had to walk, what, thirty-five, forty minutes to get to the coffee shop?"

Richie gave Eddie a look he didn't understand. It didn't matter. Whatever caused Richie to walk there only to have to backtrack to get back to the apartment, he was going to have to tell Eddie. He wasn't going to demand Richie tell him. He started walking again.

"There's something wrong with me wanting to take a walk or hang out with my roommate?"

Eddie didn't answer and Richie didn't say anything else. He shoved his hands in his pockets and walked next to Eddie. Honestly, he would have been fine with Richie showing up at the coffee shop. He'd probably have been fine with Richie flirting with Carla too, if it

hadn't been for his phone call with Bev earlier.

Richie didn't say anything when they got back to the apartment. He sat at the counter as Eddie started making something to eat. Even though he'd only know Richie for a few days, he knew a quiet Richie was weird. It was starting to get uncomfortable.

"What?" Eddie demanded, slamming the knife he was holding on the counter.

"You tell me. I felt like last night we were having a good time, but after I showed up at the coffee shop, you're acting like you hate me."

Eddie sighed. Maybe he should just tell Richie. He didn't have anything to lose. Richie could make fun of him of course, but who cares. Richie might think he was a loser, but Eddie was a loser. Stan made sure to remind them of that whenever they were together. It was oddly comforting when he said it. Eddie looked at Richie and thought *might as well tell him*.

## 4. Chapter 4

“I’m sorry, what?” Eddie choked out.

He’d just finished telling Richie his predicament. Honestly Richie was still trying to figure out why it was such a big deal. Despite all of his questions it came down to Eddie just not being ready to tell his friends about the breakup. He’d try to convince Eddie that it would probably be best in the end if he just told them, but Eddie wasn’t having it.

Not only that, Eddie was somehow convinced he would be able to meet someone and get to know them well enough that he could convince his lifelong friends they’d been dating for almost a year. Which is why Richie suggested what he thought was a brilliant idea. Eddie just seemed unable to process it.

“Why don’t you just have someone pretend to be your boyfriend? Don’t you have a close friend that would do it?” Richie repeated.

“Even if that wasn’t the dumbest idea I’ve ever heard, the only people who know me well enough to fool my friends, are my friends.”

“I’ll do it.” Eddie almost dropped the spoon he was tasting from. “Seriously, we have two months to get to know each other and practice.”

Richie wanted to tell himself he was doing it to be a good roommate and friend. Honestly though, he just liked the idea of spending time with Eddie. This gave him an excuse to spend more time with him. Not to mention, he always thought it would be fun to try something like this.

“No, it would never work. I mean first of all, there’s no way I could act like we’d been dating for almost a year. Second, each of my friends would ask a very specific question and we don’t have an answer to them. Three, we’d have to be physically comfortable with acting like we’re dating. Fourth –”

“What questions?”

Eddie gave him a look of sheer disbelief, like he couldn't believe Richie was still entertaining the thought. Richie wasn't worried though. He knew he'd be fine with the comfort level. He'd always been overly physical with his affection anyways.

"How did we meet, where was our first date, when was our first kiss, what we see in each other. The usual."

"We met at a bar and –"

"Nope. They'll see through that in a second. I hate going to the bar and I definitely wouldn't be in one without one of them."

"Fine." Richie paused to think of something Eddie might go along with. "I was doing a six-month internship at a local radio station and stopped into the coffee shop you worked in. Every day I went in I used a pickup line on you, and you were adamant you hated them."

Eddie stared at Richie as if considering it. Then Richie remembered the way Eddie acted when he'd been talking to Carla. He could tell he was off, probably from the phone call with Bev. But that wasn't all of it. If Richie was right, it seemed like Eddie was almost jealous.

"You finally gave me your number, written on my to go cup mind you, because you got jealous when you thought I was flirting with your coworker. I called you the second I saw it. I was still in the store. Our first date was to an art museum."

Eddie made a noise, as if tell him that wasn't realistic. "I'll say it's because I thought you would like it. You'll say you stared at the paintings long enough to convince me you actually liked art. The real reason I took you there though was so I could stare at you when you were looking at the paintings. As for how you feel about me, you'll have to come up with that on your own."

Richie watched as Eddie debated with himself. It wouldn't be hard to pretend he liked Eddie. Because he already did. Hell, he liked him the second Richie had opened the door. Eddie had looked so cute when he tried to act like he'd mixed up the dates instead of Richie just forgetting. Richie stood up, going to get a cup.

"It doesn't matter. We're not going to make up a first kiss without it sounding fake."

Eddie crossed his arms in a matter of fact fashion. Richie had one arm above Eddie on the handle of the cupboard. He dropped it to cup Eddie's face, brushing his thumb across his cheek. He leaned down and kissed Eddie gently as his other hand landed on his hip.

He pulled back and looked down at Eddie. Eddie looked up at him with shock and something else, but Richie couldn't tell what. Richie didn't move his hands. Both of them were silent. It took all of his willpower not to kiss Eddie again.

"We'll say you were being adorably obstinate, and I was being infuriately optimistic one day when you were cooking dinner. I just looked at you and couldn't help but kiss you. I don't think that sounds fake."

Richie knew by the way Eddie was looking at him this was a bad idea. He was going to fall for him and then in two months, everything was going to be over. But he couldn't back out now. He couldn't back out even if he wanted to. Finally, he dropped his hands and stepped back.

"How about you think it over tonight and let me know in the morning? We can even do a practice run with my bandmates."

Richie didn't push it the rest of the night and Eddie didn't talk about it. They ate dinner and talked like normal, but something felt different. Richie told himself it was because of his proposition, but he knew it was the kiss. He stayed up most of the night thinking about it.

Richie wasn't exactly sure when he fell asleep, but he woke up to Eddie knocking on his door at five in the morning. He leaned against the door frame, looking down at a frustrated Eddie. He looked adorable and disheveled. Richie was guessing he hadn't slept much either.

"If we're going to do this, we have to get our stories straight. I mean practicing them nonstop for the next two months," Eddie grumbled.

“Stories like you’re absolutely not a morning person, but I find it charming?”

Eddie rolled his eyes. “Are you sure about this? I can’t have you cancelling on me at the last second.”

“I’m in, one hundred percent.”



## 5. Chapter 5

The two months were almost over, and every day Eddie was realizing how awful this idea had been. They'd gone over their stories so many times, Eddie was starting to think of them as real. He could almost picture the art from the museum Richie had joked about the first night they'd talked about it. He could almost hear his shitty pick up lines.

He was getting too comfortable with the idea of dating Richie. Whenever he had a hard day, he couldn't wait to get home. Well, he couldn't wait to see Richie. Even when they weren't talking, which wasn't often, it was nice knowing he was there.

He was even getting used to how physical Richie was. It wasn't even a flirty way. Eddie had learned that Richie was that way with everyone. The few times he'd gone with Richie to practice, he realized that. Normally Eddie would hate that, but something about Richie doing it didn't bother him. Richie would snake his arms around his waist and rest his head on his shoulder. He'd walk by and ruffle Eddie's hair. It was nice.

The problem is, it was going to end. The closer the weekend with the Losers had gotten, the more afraid he'd become. He wasn't ready to lose his current friendship or relationship or whatever they had. He was falling for his roommate and they weren't even together. Eddie groaned and fell to the bed.

"Eds, are you in there?"

"Don't call me that!"

Richie pushed open his door and stood in the doorway. Even wearing his ugly patterned, short sleeve button up, he looked hot. Eddie had to actively stop himself from pushing off his ugly shirts and kissing him breathless.

"Are you ready to leave?" Eddie nodded, pointing to his bags in the corner. "I thought you said we were going for a long weekend, not a month."

“Fuck you,” Eddie grumbled. He tried to stay angry, but he couldn’t when he heard Richie’s laugh. Richie walked across the room and stood near Eddie.

“Yeah, I mean, if you’re down. I think we have time if you want to try a squeeze in a quickie.” Richie winked, leaning closer to Eddie.

“Ew, don’t say squeeze in a quickie.” Eddie shoved him away. “Just let me get dressed and we can head out.”

A few hours later they were sitting on their flight. Eddie’s leg was bouncing from nerves. He didn’t mind flying, he was just, overthinking. The Losers were going to take one look at them and know that Eddie had been lying. This was a bad idea. Richie was right he should have just told Bev that day on the phone.

Especially because Richie really wasn’t like the usual guys he dated. He was loud and inappropriate. He drew attention to anyone he was with. Richie was incredible touchy-feely and had no concept of personal space. Richie also affected Eddie in a way most of his exes hadn’t. And all Richie had to do was look at him. He nearly jumped when he felt a hand land on his leg to stop him from bouncing it.

“Eddie,” Richie said pulling him from his thoughts. Eddie turned; eyes wide in confusion. “He’ll just have a water, thanks.” Eddie whipped around to see the flight attendant nodding and pouring him a glass of water. “Are you okay?”

Eddie nodded and took the water. But, no, he was absolutely not okay. He went to take a sip of the water when he swears Richie’s hand moved slightly up his leg. He flinched and caused half the water to splash onto his jeans. Richie laughed, but didn’t remove his hand. In fact, he inched it higher.

“You need to calm down,” Richie said leaning closer so he could whisper in Eddie’s ear. “I have a couple ideas on how to help. Hell, one of them involves joining a club.”

Eddie jumped up, brushing Richie’s hand away as he did. The woman across the aisle gave them a surprised look. Eddie ducked his head trying to hide his blush. He mumbled something about drying his

pants and hurried to the bathroom with a laughing Richie behind him.

He didn't say anything when he sat down. Richie didn't either. Well, he didn't say anything inappropriate. There's no way that Richie would just stop talking. Was this how Richie was going to be acting the whole weekend? There's no way he was going to make it without having a breakdown. Maybe Richie knew about Eddie's feelings and was tormenting him for fun.

Eddie glanced at Richie who was playing a game on his phone. Maybe he could mess with Richie too. Richie already expected him to act differently when they were around his friends. He'd actually wondered how Richie acted when he was flustered. Maybe this trip was going to be more fun than he thought.

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They were standing outside of the house Bev had rented. Suddenly this situation felt way more real. He knew it hadn't really been that long since he saw everyone, but he was used to seeing them every day. What if it was awkward after all the time that passed? Richie seemed to notice his apprehension. He was looking at Eddie with concern, waiting for him to make the first move.

"Sorry, can we just hold off for a minute?" Eddie took a deep breath. "I just. I don't know why I'm nervous. They're my best friends!"

Richie dropped the bags he was holding. He leaned down so they were the same height. His hand went to Eddie's chin, forcing him to look at Richie. "Look at me, it's going to be okay, no matter what happens."

Eddie nodded. He couldn't help it, his eyes dropped to Richie's mouth for a second before going back to his eyes. Something flashed in them, but Eddie couldn't figure out what. He suddenly realized how close Richie was standing. That his hand was still holding his face.

"I have an idea on how to distract myself from the nerves," Eddie said, trying to sound innocent as he thread his fingers through Richie's hair.

Richie's brows furrowed. "I'm assuming you're not saying face them head on."

He pulled slightly and heard Richie's breath hitch. He figured this was okay, after all they were officially fake dating. Anyone could walk out and see them. This would make them believe the ruse. That's what Eddie told himself anyways. Before he could talk himself out of it, he kissed Richie.

It took Richie about one second to react. His free hand went to Eddie's waist, pulling him closer. The hand on Eddie's chin moved to rest next to his head. Richie pushed Eddie against the side of the house. It's all part of the act, Eddie told himself. He really didn't want to believe that though. Eddie pulled on Richie's hair and Richie pulled back slightly to curse.

With that, Eddie dropped his hand and placed it on Richie's chest, pushing him back. Richie stared at him, confused. His hair was only slightly messed. His pupils wider than normal. His breathing slowly going back to normal. *Perfect*. Serves him right for messing with him on the plane.

"Thanks," Eddie stepped out of Richie's grasp. Then he winked. "Babe."

## 6. Chapter 6

Richie swallowed, watching as Eddie walked into the house. That's when he realized Eddie was getting him back for the plane ride. Richie picked up the bags he'd dropped and followed Eddie inside. This weekend was about to get much more interesting.

"EDDIE!"

A red head, almost the same height as Eddie came running out of the kitchen. She threw her arms around Eddie, almost tackling him to the ground. Eddie was laughing and hugging her back with equal vigor. That must be Bev. Two guys followed Bev out. Were all of Eddie's friends attractive? What the hell?

"I missed you so much," he barely heard Eddie whisper. "Like I don't think I realized just how much, but shit." Eddie dropped his arms. "All of you, not just Bev."

"But he definitely missed me the most." Bev wrapped an arm around Eddie's waist and started leading him to the kitchen. Richie almost missed the next comment she whispered to Eddie. "He's like, really cute."

Richie looked around awkwardly. He wasn't sure where to put the bags. He was assuming the two guys in front of him were Stan and Ben, but Eddie had mostly described their personalities. The one he thought was Stan had soft looking curls and a disapproving look on his face. The other seemed to just radiate warmth and happiness.

Richie stepped forward, holding his hand out. "Hey, I'm Richie." The other two introduced themselves, confirming his suspicions.

"Richard, just leave your bags there! I'll show you your room later," Bev yelled.

He set them by the door and walked through the kitchen's entry way. Eddie was sitting on the counter. The same thing he did in their apartment when they were just hanging out. It was nice to know he felt as comfortable around Richie as he felt around his long-time

friends. Richie kind of wished it was just the two of them.

“I want to know everything,” Bev said.

She jumped off the counter and pulled Richie towards the table. He sat in the chair she pointed at. Both Bev and Stan sat across from him. It was oddly intimidating, like meeting someone’s parents. The good news is, parents loved him, once he put a filter on. Ben laughed before going to stand next to Eddie. They both watched with amusement.

It was rapid fire questions. Where they met, who asked out who, how did Richie do it, where they went for their first date, why Richie went there, how their first kiss happened, all the questions Eddie had prepared him for.

“Alright, Eddie, for these next questions you need to leave.” Richie could see he was about to protest, but Bev continued. “Go wake up Mike and run to the store. I have a list of things we need for dinner and you’re going to bias Richie’s answers.”

Eddie grumbled as he jumped down from the counter. He was muttering something about Bev minding her own business and how this wasn’t fair. He started to walk out of the kitchen when Richie stood up. He grabbed Eddie’s wrist, spinning him. He wrapped an arm around Eddie’s waist, pulling him close. Richie kissed Eddie. Much to Richie’s surprise, Eddie responded enthusiastically. He almost forgot about the others when Stan cleared his throat.

Richie let go of Eddie, dropping back into his chair. “Be quick, babe.”

Eddie scoffed at the nickname but didn’t say anything else. Ben left with Eddie to show him where Mike’s room was. They didn’t come back, but Bev still waited until they heard the front door close before saying anything. She stood up and crossed the table, leaning against it as she looked down at Richie.

“Are you going to ask me what my intentions are?”

“I don’t really give a shit what your intentions are. Just know if you hurt him, I will personally kill you. I will make it slow and torturous.

I will make sure nobody finds your body. And I have five other people who will help me make that possible.” Richie glanced at Stan. “Are we clear?”

Richie nodded, knowing if he answered he’d make some inappropriate comment. Eddie would have been proud. He really hoped that Eddie was quick. The tension in the room was insane. Tension and Richie usually ended poorly. He shifted under the two’s gazes.

“Good,” Bev finally said. She stood up and walked to go get a drink from the fridge.

“How do you feel about Eddie?” Stan said. “Because he’s been through some shit. I don’t believe you’ve been dating for a year. I don’t. I would say, at most, a month.”

“And that’s being generous,” Bev interrupted, sitting back down at the table.

“I can tell by the way he looks at you, this isn’t some fling,” Stan continued. “He cares about you, so if this is something you’re going to bail on, you better bail now. Eddie cares too much about people, but he’d never admit it.”

Richie looked between the two. He knew the six of his friends, the Losers as Eddie called them, were close, but they saw through the lies they’d been practicing for two months in the matter of minutes. He wasn’t going to tell them that, though. He did have to figure out how he felt about Eddie in a few seconds.

“I’m not good at this,” Richie said. “Feelings and shit.” They waited. “I can’t tell you okay, because I don’t even know! But I want to spend every day Eddie will let me, figuring it out.”

## 7. Chapter 7

“Well, shit.”

Richie didn't respond to Eddie. Both of them had overlooked the fact that they would likely be sharing a bed. That detail became abundantly clear when they'd entered the room Ben said was theirs. Richie didn't really have a problem sharing a bed with someone. He did have a problem sharing a bed with his cute roommate he was definitely not developing feelings for.

“I'll sleep on the couch,” Eddie finally spoke. He was keeping his voice low in case someone walked by. “I'll just say you snore or something.”

“We've been *dating* for a year and live together. I don't think they'll buy that.” Richie ran a hand over his face. “I'll sleep on the floor.”

“I got us into this mess, I'm not making you sleep on the floor.”

“It's your trip, I'm not letting you sleep on the floor.” There was silence for a minute. “Look, I don't mind sharing.” Richie didn't look at Eddie. For some reason he thought Eddie would be able to see through his lie. “If you do, I'll take the floor.”

“It's fine,” Eddie huffed.

Richie tossed his bag in the corner and dropped onto the bed. It was insanely comfy. He was going to sleep well over the weekend. He glanced over at Eddie who was unpacking and putting his things in the dresser. Richie suppressed a laugh. Of course, Eddie was the type of person to unpack his bags even for a weekend.

Richie found it endearing when Eddie plugged in both his own and Richie's phone charges. There was something meticulous about the way he went about organizing his things. Almost like he'd gone through it a million times, but still had to focus to make it perfect.

“How was the interrogation?” Eddie asked.

“I failed. They don't think we've been dating for a year. We've got to



up our game.”

Eddie gave him a doubtful look, but Richie could tell he was worried. Richie wasn't sure where he'd gone wrong earlier. He'd only had one relationship with someone longer than six months and it ended with her cheating on him. How he'd been acting around Eddie felt more natural than that had though, so what could it have been?

Richie sat up and moved to the end of the bed, so his legs were hanging off it. Eddie stopped so he was within arm's reach. Neither of them said anything. Richie wasn't sure what he could say to make Eddie feel better. Then he heard someone talking outside their door and acted on instinct.

Richie grabbed Eddie's wrist and pulled. He stumbled forward with a gasp. Eddie dropped on to the bed, straddling Richie. The look of surprise on Eddie's face was adorably charming. Richie didn't have time to think about that though. He leaned forward to kiss Eddie's neck. Richie ran his hand up Eddie's side, pushing his shirt up as he did.

Someone knocked and without an answer, they threw the door open. Eddie pushed Richie forward and jumped off the bed. He didn't look at Bev or Mike, who had just entered the room. Richie let out a nervous laugh, propping himself up on his elbows. His eyes didn't leave Eddie and the blush on his face. He scrambled to adjust his shirt. Richie was definitely *not* falling for his roommate.

“DOORS HAVE LOCKS FOR A REASON!” Bev snapped.

“Sorry Bev,” Eddie mumbled. “What's up?”

“I was going to see if you wanted to help Mike and me with dinner, but if you're busy—”

“Nope, I'll be down in a second,” Eddie said as quickly as possible.

Mike and Bev both laughed and walked out of the room. Eddie closed the door after them. He leaned against it to look at Richie. It's a good thing too. Richie probably would have pulled Eddie back on the bed with him if he were close enough.

“Sorry, I heard them talking outside.”

“It’s fine. I was just surprised.” Eddie paused, eyes not moving from Richie. For a second, it looked like he wanted to continue too. There was a hesitancy with his words, like he wanted Richie to stop him. “I guess I’m going to go downstairs. I’ll see you in a bit?” He didn’t move.

“Yeah,” Richie breathed, not moving either.

It felt like forever before Eddie left. Richie groaned, falling back on the bed. He could not be falling for his roommate. Why did he suggest this? He should have just let Eddie tell Bev that he broke up with his boyfriend and come alone this weekend.

Eventually, Richie snapped himself out of it. He went downstairs to join the others. Richie was surprised how well he integrated with them. Eddie was right when he said they all had different personalities. Richie found that he honest-to-god enjoyed talking to each of them.

It didn’t matter how well he got along with the Losers though. Richie just wanted to spend time with Eddie. He found himself looking into the kitchen where Eddie was catching up with Mike and Bev. He couldn’t help but smile when he heard Eddie’s laugh. It took all of Richie’s self-control not to go over there and kiss him like the night they’d agreed to do this. This weekend was going to be hell.

## 8. Chapter 8

Eddie couldn't remember a time he felt this content, peaceful. Although he always felt that way when he was around the Losers. They were sitting around a campfire, reminiscing. Richie seemed to click with the others, better than Audra even. Eddie didn't want to admit it, but the reason he felt so peaceful was probably because of Richie.

Richie was doing a really good job selling the whole fake dating act. There were times Eddie forgot that they weren't dating. Richie was making it so going back to just roommates was going to be hard. Eddie wished this weekend wouldn't end so he didn't have to do that.

He snuggled closer to Richie, enjoying the warmth more than the small amount from the fire. Was this guy always warm? Eddie was sitting on Richie's lap, head resting on his chest. Richie had an arm wrapped lazily around him. He was talking to Mike about music.

Eddie hummed in content, wishing he wasn't so sleepy. The sooner he fell asleep, the sooner he had to go home. Someone was talking to him, but he couldn't make out their words. Then he felt more than heard Richie speaking. Eddie shook his head, hoping that made sense. Then he felt Richie laugh.

The next thing Eddie knew he was being lifted into the air. He didn't fight it, just assumed that Richie was carrying him to bed. Richie was surprisingly gentle laying him down. He heard his phone chime when Richie plugged it in. He snuggled into the blankets.

"Eds, seriously? I doubt you want to sleep in your jeans." Eddie grumbled in response. "If I let you sleep in your jeans, you'll hate me in the morning." Richie threw the blankets off Eddie. "Off," he said while taping Eddie's hip.

Eddie unbuttoned his jeans then kicked them off. "Blanket."

Richie laughed and pulled the blanket over Eddie. Eddie fell asleep in a matter of seconds.

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Eddie was warm. Why was the room so warm? Why were the blankets so heavy? Why were the blankets moving? Oh. Richie had an arm and leg thrown over Eddie. His face was buried in Eddie's neck. For someone so lanky he weighed a ton. Eddie tried to push him away, but Richie's arm tightened, pulling Eddie against his chest.

Eddie wished he hated it. He would deny it until his grave that he sunk into Richie's embrace. He didn't sleep the rest of the night. Maybe he should just come clean to his friends. He was starting to fall for Richie, and he didn't want to ruin any friendship they could have. Pretending the rest of the weekend might just make it all worse.

"You awake?" Richie grumbled. His voice deeper with sleep. Eddie was screwed. "How much do you remember from last night?"

"Why?" Eddie said, jolting away from Richie. How had he not realized Richie wasn't wearing a shirt?

"Calm down. I just didn't want you thinking I stripped you or something," Richie laughed.

Eddie looked down at Richie. He rolled onto his back, but still had his eyes close. Eddie knew Richie was attractive. He'd known that from when he first showed up at the apartment. But, fuck, he was gorgeous. Eddie couldn't look away. The sun was just starting to rise and was casting a soft light over Richie's freckled cheeks.

"Take a picture, it'll last longer," Richie laughed.

"Real original," Eddie scoffed, hoping Richie didn't notice his blush.

Richie opened his eyes. The blue seemed more vibrant. Eddie gasped slightly and Richie's eyes widened in response, but he didn't say anything in response. He just stared at Eddie. He was staring at Eddie in a way that roommates didn't stare at each other.

"I didn't expect you to be a morning person."

"I'm not."

“Must be the person you’re waking up next to,” Richie laughed before stretching. Eddie’s eyes definitely didn’t move down Richie when he did. “At what point would your friends burst in here if we don’t get up?”

Eddie glanced at the clock. It was already 8:30. Everyone except Bev was probably up and she usually didn’t sleep past nine. Whenever Bev woke up, she made a point to wake Eddie up. If she didn’t force him out of bed, he’d sleep until noon. It’d started as an act of rebellion against his mother and just became a habit.

There was a knock on the door that had to be Bev. Richie and Eddie both acted this time. They were getting better at this. Despite the rush, their kiss was gentle, like a good morning kiss would be. The door opened and Eddie leaned back. Neither Richie nor Eddie looked at the door. Eddie bit his lip. Something about that kiss seemed different than the other times. It seemed more like when Richie had kissed him in the apartment before they’d decided to do this.

“Mike and Ben made breakfast, are you hungry?”

“Fuck yeah,” Richie said.

He jumped off the bed, turning away from the door as he looked for something to wear. Bev smiled at Eddie and gave him a thumbs up. Eddie whipped a pillow at her, but it hit the far wall. She laughed and walked away.

Richie was putting on a belt when he looked back at Eddie. “You know what would really annoy Stan? We should wear matching clothes.”

“Richie, you don’t even own clothes that match each other.”

“Low blow, Eddie, low blow.”

Richie pulled on a shirt then turned to look at Eddie. For a second it looked like he was going to kiss him again. Then he smiled and made a gesture towards the door and walked out. Eddie was about to get up when Richie leaned back into the room.

“Don’t think about me too long, babe,” Richie winked before leaving

again. Of course he'd ruin the moment.

## 9. Chapter 9

“I thought we were friends,” Eddie yelled. “I trusted you Bev!” Eddie could hear Richie laughing, but he refused to open his eyes. “We could have gone wine tasting or taken a cooking class, but no you had to choose the activity WHERE WE COULD DIE!”

“Eddie, you are strapped into a harness and hooked in, so even if you slip, you won't fall.”

“ROPES BREAK BEVERLY.”

He was going to die. He was going to die on this stupid ropes course. He was half-way to the others but was paralyzed with fear. Why did he even agree to do this? Where was his inhaler? He was grasping to the rope for dear life, eyes squeezed shut.

“Eddie,” Richie said, his voice gentle. “Babe, you're going to have to move. Okay?”

“Do not call me babe,” Eddie growled.

“I promise if you cross the rest of the way, I'll make it worth your while.”

Eddie could hear the suggestive tone in Richie's voice, he didn't need to open his eyes and see the look Richie was giving him. Part of him wondered what exactly Richie had in mind, but he couldn't let his thoughts go there.

“Or, I could just share really personal things about our relationship until you finally are able to stop me.” If Eddie wasn't already frozen in fear, he would have immediately frozen. “Like how the first time you slept over I woke up to you moaning my name.”

“Beep Beep Richie,” Stan snapped.

If Eddie wasn't so afraid of dying, he'd have laughed. Last night Richie was about to make an inappropriate joke when Ben's phone went off. Stan thought it was the funniest thing and said that beep beep was the only way to get Richie to stop talking.

“Or how the first time we—”

“OKAY!” Eddie interrupted, not wanting to hear whatever lie Richie was going to come up with.

He started moving, slowly. He knew the others were speaking to him, but he was tuning them out. If Eddie focused on anything except moving, he was going to freeze up again. It felt like hours, but he finally joined Richie on the platform. Everyone had already move ahead on the course. The second Eddie’s feet hit the boards, he clung to Richie, trying to control his breathing.

“Afraid of heights?”

“I’m afraid of dying,” Eddie grumbled into Richie’s chest. Then he remembered the others, they might be watching. “What happened to making it worth my while?”

“Really don’t think it’d be safe to try it out while suspended in the air.”

Richie and Eddie ended up going back to the ground while the others finished. Eddie was way more comfortable encouraging everyone from there. After they were done with the ropes course, they had to do trust building activities. Which ended with Eddie blind folded, trusting Richie’s directions.

“I’m not saying this isn’t a fun activity Bev,” Eddie started.

“It’s not a fun activity,” Stan interrupted. So far Mike had caused him to step in four different mud puddles.

“Put your arms up Eddie,” Richie instructed. Eddie lifted his arms. “Now walk forward slowly.”

Eddie had his arms out wide. Richie had already caused him to walk into two trees and a bush. If he fell in the lake he was going to be pissed. How long was he going to be walking for? Maybe he should just stop. Just then he ran into something, or someone.

“RICHIE. The game is not to guide me towards to you. We are going to lose,” Eddie snapped.



Then Richie kissed him. "I don't know what game you're playing, but I'm winning mine."

"BOOO," Bev yelled, even though she was blindfolded and couldn't tell what was going on.

"Awwww," Ben said.

Eddie pulled off his blindfold in time to see Bev face plant a few feet away from the finish line. Stan stepped into another mud puddle before throwing the blind fold off and frantically waving at Mike. Bill was yelling at Audra and when she ran across the finish line, he picked her up and spun her around.

Eddie looked up at Richie. "I hope you're happy, because we just lost."

"It's not a big deal, it's just a game."

"A game we could have won!" Eddie spun around. "Alright, my partner sucks. I want a rematch."

"Mike and Richie can be partners," Stan yelled.

"NO! No, you and Eddie are not allowed to be partners anymore. Not after Charades," Bev shouted.

The retreat guide finally got them to stop arguing and move onto the next activities. By the end of the day, Eddie was exhausted and wanted nothing more than to go back to the house and fall asleep. Of course, Bev wasn't going to let that happen though. One of the guides had told her about a bar that had karaoke that night and she wanted all of them to go. And that meant all of them were going.

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"We chose them. We let this happen," Audra groaned.

Richie and Bill were on stage singing what had to be their tenth duet of the night. Eddie knew Richie could sing, but the longer the night went on, the less he believed that. They were currently singing I'm Gonna Be by the Proclaimers. It was mostly out of tune and the accent Richie was using was the worst Scottish accent Eddie could

imagine.

When they got to the final words, Richie handed the mic to the closest person and rushed over to where Eddie was sitting. He draped himself over the other side of the booth as he sang : "fall down at your door". When he finally sat up to let Bill sit down, Richie had the biggest smile on his face.

"Eds, you've got to sing a song with me!"

"Not going to happen. And don't call me Eds."

Richie crossed his arms, pretending to pout. Eddie rolled his eyes, taking a sip from his drink. Richie turned to Stan, trying to convince him to sing a song with him. Bev dropped down next to him. She handed a shot glass to both him and Audra.

"Cheers," Audra laughed and the three of them downed the shots.

"Fuck, Bev, what was that?" Eddie choked out.

"Maybe if you didn't get used to the fancy liquor in California," Bev joked. "So." She leaned closer. "How long have you really been dating Richie?"

Eddie choked on his drink, coughing in surprise. Why didn't she believe them? Eddie felt more comfortable around Richie than he had any of his past boyfriends. It was more believable that Richie and Eddie were dating than any of his other relationships.

"What? I don't? Why would—"

"You just seem really happy. I haven't seen you like this with someone before. You seem more like friends." Bev shrugged. "Especially because he's currently flirting with that girl over there."

Eddie took another drink, glancing at Richie. Bev was right. Eddie had never been the jealous type, especially when he wasn't even dating a person, but when Richie leaned in closer to hear what the girl was saying and then laughed, that's exactly how he felt.

Bev was watching him, waiting to see how he reacted. Eddie took a

deep break, drank the rest of his drink before crossing to the bar where Richie was standing. Richie's eyes lit up when he saw Eddie, but the girl didn't move away.

"So, are you here with someone?" The girl asked twirling her hair.

Eddie refrained from rolling his eyes. He leaned against the bar, staring at Richie. "I was wondering the same thing."

"I actually am," Richie answered, not looking away from Eddie. The girl huffed and mumbled something before walking away. "I'd watch out though, he's kind of the jealous type. Doesn't like me talking to attractive people."

"Yeah, well, that girl was really cute; you could probably still get her number if you wanted."

"I think I'd rather buy you a drink."

"You sure your boyfriend won't mind?"

"I think I'll take the risk."

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"Staniel," Richie yelled, throwing an arm around Stan. "I can't believe you wouldn't sing a song with me!"

Stan wrapped his arms around Richie, the two of them stumbling as he did. "I couldn't upstage you while singing. Imagine how that would look for your band!"

"You've always known what's best for me, Stan."

Eventually Stan dropped his arms so he could walk with Mike. Ben was giving Bev a piggyback ride and Audra was slumped against Bill, barely able to walk. Eddie definitely had too much to drink. Between the alcohol and exhaustion, he was surprised he was still walking. He wished Richie wasn't so drunk and maybe he'd be able to carry him. They were still half a mile from the house when Eddie dropped onto a bench.

"You okay, Eddie?" Mike asked.

Eddie waved his hand. “Just need a breather, you guys keep walking.”

Richie looked over his shoulder, before turning around to sit next to Eddie. “I’ll make sure he gets back safe and sound!”

Stan scoffed, but didn’t say anything. No one argued or offered to stay. They were as tired as Eddie and just wanted to get back home. Eddie leaned his head back, staring up at the stars. He almost forgot Richie was there.

“I like your friends.”

“Yeah, they’re alright,” Eddie laughed, turning to look at Richie. “I kind of wish they believed we were dating.”

“In their defense, we’re not.” Eddie would never admit how much the finality in Richie’s voice hurt.

“Nope, we’re just pretending,” Eddie said with equal finality. If anything, it was a way to remind himself. This was never going to be more than this weekend. He stood up. “I’m ready whenever you are.”

Richie looked at him and, surprisingly, stood without a word. They didn’t talk on the way back. Eddie tried not to look at Richie, but once and a while, he glanced over at him. Every time he looked, Richie quickly turned away, like he hadn’t been staring at Eddie.

*Shit.* Did he know? Did he know that Eddie had a crush on him? That he didn’t want this weekend to end? Hopefully Richie wouldn’t remember much of tonight. Hopefully he wouldn’t remember much of tonight either.

By the time they got back to the house, Richie was barely able to stand. He was leaning on Eddie for support. Getting him up the stairs was a nightmare. Mainly because he kept making inappropriate comments and pickup lines. If Richie woke anyone up, Eddie was going to lose it.

Eddie had to stop Richie from falling onto the bed when they got to their room. Eddie pushed his shirt off and Richie hummed in content.

Eddie glanced up, gauging Richie's reaction before he went to take off his belt. Richie looked like he was already sleeping.

"Buy me dinner first," he laughed, not opening his eyes.

"Oh good, you are awake. You can take your own pants off."

"Nooooooo, I'm too tired."

"Fine, sleep in your jeans, I don't care."

"Yes, you do." Eddie shot Richie a look before he pulled off his own shirt. "I think you might be an angel Eds," Richie yelled.

He grabbed Eddie's waist, tackling him to the bed. Eddie yelped as they crashed together. Eddie's eyes widen in surprise, hands landing on Richie's chest to stop him from falling. Richie smirked before flipping them over, his hand gripping Eddie's waist. His other arm propping him up.

"You even look like an angel," he whispered this time.

Eddie swallowed. He wanted nothing more than for Richie to kiss him. They were drunk, and that would be a bad idea. But Eddie wasn't in the mindset to think of good ideas. He wasn't in the mood for good decisions either. So when Richie went to kiss him, Eddie didn't try to stop him.



didn't mean anything, it was just a drunken kiss. Maybe if Eddie brought it up, he could just pretend he didn't know. Or maybe he should just tell Eddie how he felt, and they could salvage some kind of relationship out of the whole mess.

"Richie, I messed up last night," Eddie finally spoke. Richie could tell he was panicking. He couldn't let Eddie blame himself.

"No, no you didn't. I'm the one that kissed you. It was a mistake and I'm sorry," Richie said. He sat up and saw Eddie staring at him from the foot of the bed.

"We kissed?" He didn't know. Eddie wasn't freaking out about the kiss. *Shit*. He would be now. "It was a mistake," Eddie mumbled. "Right."

Eddie looked back down at his phone, but Richie swore for a second he looked disappointed. Was he upset with himself that they kissed or was he upset that Richie called it a mistake? Richie debated what to do next, but he wanted to find out what was upsetting Eddie so much. He moved to sit behind Eddie, looking over his shoulder.

"I texted Myron."

"You drunk texted the ex that ghosted you?" Eddie turned to look at Richie. "Why?"

"He texted me first and I just, I forgot I even did it. He wants to meet me, and I said I would."

"Do you want to?" Eddie turned away from Richie, not speaking. But, Richie had his answer. "That's good. Get closure or, you know, see if there's something still there."

Richie got up. This was good. If Eddie started dating Myron, he could get over his feelings for him. It'd be easier for them to go back to being friends and that's what they both wanted. Well it's what Richie wanted to want.

"Richie." Richie paused in the doorway. "I- "

"WHO LET ME DO SHOTS YESTERDAY?" Bev screamed. She walked

by the door with a blanket thrown over her head. "I am blaming you Tozier. The boys know I'm not allowed to have shots." Bev continued walking, the blanket dragging behind her.

"QUIT YELLING, BEVERLY" Stan yelled from the kitchen.

Richie followed Bev, not wanting to continue his conversation with Eddie. He needed time to process everything. He got a cup of coffee before sitting next to Stan on the couch. Mike handed Stan some medicine and a glass of water before joining Audra and Ben. The three of them looked like they were enjoying the fact everyone else was hung over.

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They ended up spending the day watching movies and hanging out. Richie was glad that Eddie and he didn't have to talk. He wasn't ready to after earlier. Eddie had fallen asleep while leaning against Richie during the last movie. His legs were thrown over Bev's, sharing her blanket. Once the movie was over, Richie nudged Eddie awake.

"I'm comfy," Eddie murmured, burying his face in Richie's side.

Richie stood up. "You'll be comfier in bed. I promise." Eddie lifted his arms. "I'm not going to carrying you."

"You're the worst boyfriend ever," Eddie grumbled while standing.

*Except I'm not your boyfriend,* Richie almost said. Eddie didn't wait for Richie to follow him and Richie was grateful. Instead, Richie went outside with Bev to smoke. He knew she suspected something was wrong. She put her free hand over his and squeezed it once and gave him a gentle smile.

"Eddie's an idiot." Richie gave her a confused look. "I don't know what he did, but I'm sure he did something. Maybe you both did. All I know is he likes you, a lot." Richie shook his head. "Really. He's only introduced us to one boyfriend before. And we can all tell that you're different."

"I don't know Bev."



"I do." She laughed and stood up. "And you'll figure it out soon enough."

Richie rolled his eyes. The more he was around Bev, the more he realized why Eddie liked her. Richie sighed, knowing it didn't matter. He wasn't going to see her again after this weekend. He wasn't going to see any of them again. Could this day get any worse?

After he was sure everyone had gone to bed, he made his way upstairs. He wasn't tired, but he needed to charge his phone. Hopefully he'd be able to sneak in and out of the room without Eddie waking up. He leaned against the door, looking at Eddie.

Richie couldn't help but smile at how peaceful he looked. Eddie was sleeping in Richie's hoodie. He was sprawled across the entire bed. Eddie rolled so he was facing the door, squinting slightly at Richie.

"What are you doing?"

"I just had to charge my phone."

Eddie threw the covers back, moving to one side of the bed. "Well quit being creepy and come to bed."

"I'm not really that tired, I'll probably just—"

"Whatever you're freaking out about, we'll talk about it in the morning. You need to get some sleep. If you want me to sleep on the floor, I will."

Richie didn't answer, but it didn't matter, Eddie was already sleeping again. He crawled into bed, trying not to curl up next to Eddie. Richie laid there, staring at the ceiling, the whole night. *We'll talk about it in the morning. We'll.* He was overthinking it, but he didn't care. He liked the idea of the two of them doing something. He liked it almost as much as when Eddie rolled over and threw an arm around Richie. Which paled in comparison to the way he felt when he heard Eddie moan softly then whisper his name. Richie definitely wasn't sleeping after that.

## 11. Chapter 11

When Eddie woke up the next morning, Richie wasn't in the room. He could have sworn he'd come in the night before. Maybe he'd dreamt that. Eddie's eyes widen when he remembered his other dream. Hopefully Richie coming into the room had been a dream and he hadn't been there for the other one.

Eddie groaned, pulling the blanket over his head. Maybe if he stayed here long enough, he wouldn't have to face Richie and find out. He shook his head. This was the last day he'd see everyone, so he didn't want to waste it by hiding. Eddie rolled out of bed and made his way downstairs.

Stan, Mike, Bev, and Richie were sitting around the table. Richie smirked at Eddie before taking a sip of his coffee and looking away. Eddie tried not to blush, looking anywhere but Richie after that. He tried to focus on their conversation but was replaying the night before over in his head.

"What about you, Eddie?" Bev asked. "Did you have any weird dreams last night?"

Eddie almost dropped his coffee cup. The others were staring at him, waiting for an explanation. Richie had an amused look on his face. *Shit, he knew.* Had he told the others? They were going to make fun of Eddie and Richie was never going to let him forget. What a fantastic start to the day.

"Nope," he lied, turning away from them so they couldn't see him blush.

"Weird, all of us did," Mike said. "Except Richie, he said he couldn't sleep."

Eddie fought the urge to ask why. That would just spur Richie on. Eddie made his way to the couch where Ben had just sat down. He wanted to be as far away from that conversation as possible. Ben apparently did not sense that from Eddie.

“Why couldn’t you sleep?”

“Eddie is a real chatterbox when he sleeps. You should have heard what he was saying last night.” Eddie made the mistake of looking at Richie. Richie winked. “Must have been one hell of a dream, Eds.”

Eddie coughed into his mug, causing the others to look at him. Ben patted him on the back. “Yeah, I was choking you,” Eddie finally managed to say.

“Kinky.”

Eddie rolled his eyes and flipped Richie off. Hopefully distracting everyone from his reddening face. “You died.”

“I feel like this is going down a dangerous path and I would prefer if you stopped,” Stan interrupted.

“Don’t worry Stan, you’ll forever have a place in my late-night fantasies.” Richie kissed Stan on the cheek before he could pull away. Stan scoffed getting up from the table.

Luckily the others changed the conversation after that. Eddie wasn’t able to look at Richie without thinking about his dream and blushing. The plane ride home that night was going to be horrible. Partially through the day Eddie excused himself to go pack, hoping to clear his head a little bit. Apparently, the universe was against him, though.

He heard the door shut and turned to see Richie leaning against it. “Are you planning to ignore me the whole day?” Eddie rolled his eyes before glaring at Richie. “Why don’t you tell me what’s got you all hot and bothered?”

Eddie threw the shirt he was folding on the dresser, ready to snap at Richie. But Richie grabbed one of his arms, turning him so he was pressed against the wall. His other arm landed next to Eddie’s head. Eddie couldn’t stop the small gasp of surprise from the movement. Eddie blinked up at Richie, who was smirking down at him.

“Or you could tell me about your dream last night. The one that had you moaning my name.” Eddie swallowed, looking away from Richie.

He glanced at the door. Had Richie heard someone outside and was pretending in case someone came into the room again. Richie sighed. "What's going on with you?"

"It doesn't matter." At least it wouldn't when they went back to being roommates.

"Is it your meeting with Myron?"

Eddie's eyes went back to Richie. Why did he sound so upset about the meeting? The meeting. He'd forgotten he was meeting with Myron. Richie had been right though. He needed to get closure on the whole thing. Richie dropped his arms stepping away while nodding.

"Wait," Eddie said, but when Richie turned around, he didn't know what to say. Richie waited a second but left when Eddie didn't speak. They shouldn't have done this. Eddie shouldn't have agreed. They'd just messed up any relationship they could have had.

## 12. Chapter 12

*Months.* It'd been months since they'd gotten back from the weekend with the other Losers. The trip back had been awkward to say the least. Richie and Eddie barely looked at each other. When they got back to their apartment, they both went to their rooms without a word. Eddie had hoped they'd talk about it, but he never saw Richie anymore. Some days, it felt like Richie was never at the apartment.

Eddie had met up with Myron the week they'd returned. A month later they'd started dating. At first Eddie had thought something could happen between him and Richie. Hell, if Eddie thought Richie would say yes, he would have asked Richie out. But he wasn't sure, so he agreed to try things with Myron again.

Two months later, Eddie couldn't remember the last time he spoke with Richie. He listened to him everyday on the radio and was planning to go to his band's show soon. But he was talking to him today. Because he'd decided to move out and had to tell Richie some time. It was going to go over great. *Hey, Rich, remembered how I had to move in with you because my ex-boyfriend who is again my boyfriend ghosted me? Well we decided to give things a shot, it's been real.*

Eddie let his head fall forward, forgetting how close he was to the door. He cursed under his breath when he knocked into it, stumbling backwards. Eddie rubbed his forehead, not noticing when Richie opened the door. Richie cleared his throat. Eddie dropped his hand, gazing up at Richie.

He looked like shit. His hair was longer and sticking out in every direction. There were dark circles under his eyes, and it looked like he hadn't slept well since they got back from their trip. Despite looking completely exhausted, he lit up when he saw Eddie. For the first time Eddie realized just how beautiful Richie was.

"Is everything okay?"

No. "Yeah. I just," Eddie sighed. "I felt like I should let you know. I'm, I'm moving in with Myron."

“Right,” Richie said, waiting for Eddie to continue, but Eddie felt like he couldn’t speak. “Is that all?” Eddie didn’t. “Thanks for letting me know.”

Richie shut the door without another word. Eddie felt like he'd just been kicked in the stomach. He walked to his room as if in a haze. He closed his door and let his head fall against the it. *Great.*

---

“Are you sure about this?” Myron asked. “It seems, crowded. And loud. And gross.”

Eddie looked around the bar. Myron wasn’t wrong, but Eddie wasn’t leaving. It’d been a month since he moved out and he hadn’t seen Richie since. He must have started going to a new coffee shop or found out Eddie's work schedule. Carla had told Eddie that Richie’s band was performing tonight and Eddie knew he had to go.

Myron had complained when Eddie asked him to go and tried to suggest other places. Eddie had told him that he could stay home, but Myron insisted on joining him. Eddie wished he hadn’t. Myron kept listing all the problems they could get into just by being here. Eddie was just tuning him out. He was scanning the room for Richie, even though Eddie knew he wouldn’t be out there.

“I’m going to go to the bathroom, I’ll be right back,” Eddie called over the noise.

He left before Myron could protest or join him. He pushed through the room. He saw someone disappear down a side hall. Eddie glanced over his shoulder making sure nobody was watching before following them. The door closed softly behind him. He heard voices at the end of the hall and started walking towards them. Eddie froze when he saw a shadow.

“No, man, I’ll be right back I’m just,” Richie stopped talking when he saw Eddie. “Eddie?”

“Hi.”

Neither of them moved. They just stared at each other, like they

didn't know what to say. What could he say? *Hey, Richie, remember that ex-boyfriend I ended up moving in with? Well, things are going great! We're in love. How have you been?* Eddie felt like he'd been standing there for hours.

"I should go, we're about to go on." Richie pointed over his shoulder, acting like they'd already been talking for a while.

"Yeah," Eddie breathed.

Richie nodded before turning and walking through another door. Eddie sighed, going to join Myron by the bar. Myron was complaining about something, but Eddie wasn't able to focus on what. He'd thought he loved Myron, but maybe it just felt safe. But maybe Eddie didn't want safe. He was drawn from his thoughts by the band going on stage.

Eddie would tell anyone they were better live, but maybe he just thought that because of Richie. He looked lost in the music. A weight that had been on his shoulders earlier seemed to vanish. A weight that Eddie had caused.

"Myron, I think we should leave," Eddie said. He couldn't do this. He had to break up with Myron.

Myron nodded and stood up when the band started to leave. Well, all of them except Richie. A weird silence fell over the bar. "I know this isn't our usual song," Richie started, "but there's someone really special to me here tonight. I kinda fucked up last time I saw him. I never really got to say how I felt about him. I just want to tell him I'm sorry for how things ended."

Eddie could feel his pulse in his ears. Richie started singing an acoustic version of the Bleacher's River and Eddie was rooted in his spot. Myron was saying something, trying to get Eddie to move, but he couldn't. He couldn't that is, until the end when Richie looked directly at him.

"I hope you know, I'm not alone. I carry you with every breath I take. I won't let up," Richie sang.

Something snapped in Eddie and he took off. He left Myron in shock and he ran out of the bar. He couldn't breathe. Why was this happening? Eddie was a few stores away when he collapsed on a park bench, burying his face in his hands. Myron caught with him.

"Eddie? Eddie are you okay?" Myron asked. Eddie shook his head, knowing what he had to do.

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Eddie was just blindly walking around the city. He couldn't go back to his apartment, not immediately after breaking up with Myron. He probably wouldn't go back until he knew Myron wasn't there. But now he had to find a new place to live. At least for the remainder of the year. He should just move home. Coming to California was just proving to be one mistake after another.

What Eddie hadn't realized, was where his aimless walking was taking him. It didn't hit him until he was outside Richie's door. Eddie blinked. He wanted nothing more than to walk inside, tell Richie he was sorry, but he couldn't. He couldn't bring himself to do it. So, Eddie just stood there, unable to leave.

"I'm serious, Sandy. Go outside, I don't want my clothes smelling like smoke." Eddie heard Richie yell from behind the door.

*Shit.* Eddie didn't have time to move when the door opened. Standing in front of him was a gorgeous woman, wearing one of Richie's button ups. She leaned against the door frame looking him up and down. Eddie felt his heart drop.

"Hi, can we help you?" The girl said sweetly.

Eddie couldn't speak. Instead he rotated on his heels and took off down the hall.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Sorry for the long time between posts, I haven't had internet.



## 13. Chapter 13

“Eddie? Eddie, wait!” Richie called, but Eddie didn’t stop.

Richie ran after him, almost running into oncoming traffic without thinking. Eddie was already across the street, getting further and further away as Richie waited at the crosswalk for the cars. He pushed his glasses up so he could rub his eyes. Richie looked down at his wet socks and sighed.

He had tried to find Eddie after his show, but he was long gone. He shouldn’t have said anything. He shouldn’t have sung a song for him. Eddie probably came over to tell Richie to stay away from him. He must have come to the bar because he wanted to hang out as friends and Richie messed up his one chance at fixing things.

He groaned, turning to go back to his apartment. Sandy was sitting on the couch on her phone when he got back. Richie flopped on the couch groaning before picking up his half empty beer bottle. He heard Sandy lock her phone and felt her shifting so she could stare at him.

“Who is he?”

“Not talking about this with you.” After a beat of silence Richie sighed. “He’s my ex-roommate and I really like him, but I don’t think he likes me.”

“Well he’d be an idiot not to.”

“Then why did he run away?”

“Probably because he saw a half-naked girl in your doorway. And she’s, at the risk of sounding vain, not that bad looking.”

Richie was about to argue with her when he realized that Eddie hadn’t met Sandy before. He didn’t know she was his cheating ex. His ex that had been waiting at his door when he got back from the show. The one that’d gotten into an abusive relationship and shown up there because she didn’t know where to go.

“Fuck, he thinks we slept together.” Sandy tapped her nose. “Well that sucks.”

Sandy laughed. “Just tell him what happened and tell him how you feel.”

“I did and look how that turned out,” Richie said, gesturing to the door. “Plus, he has a boyfriend that he lives with.”

As much as he didn’t want to admit it, he needed to get over Eddie. For the last few months he’d been clinging to the idea that they would end up together. That Eddie would break up with Myron, come running to his apartment and ask him out. But that wasn’t going to happen. Richie just needed to accept that and start getting on with his life.

It really shouldn’t be that hard either. He’d already started avoiding the coffee shop Eddie worked at and other than that their schedules didn’t cross much. The hardest part would be what he’d already been dealing with. The times he was just staring at his phone in the middle of the night telling himself all the reasons he shouldn’t text Eddie. Yeah. He could do this.

---

A month had gone by and getting over Eddie was proving to be extremely difficult. He found himself walking by the coffee shop half hoping Eddie would be there, half praying he wouldn’t be. When his phone went off, he immediately thought it was Eddie. It never was.

What Richie didn’t understand is why he cared about Eddie this much. They’d been roommates for a few months and fake dated for a weekend. It wasn’t anything real. But it felt more real than most of his past relationships. Richie had wanted it to be real. Maybe that’s why it was hard. He let himself think something would happen between the two of them when Eddie made it clear nothing would.

He’d just gotten back from a band practice. Just like the last few, it went horrible. Richie couldn’t focus and every lyric he suggested was too mopey and depressing and not in a good way. Eventually the others told him to go home and get some sleep.

They were right. Richie hadn't been sleeping well. Most nights he just stared at the ceiling replaying the last year in his mind. His boss at the station had asked him if he needed time off. Well, he'd more strongly implied that Richie should either get his shit together or take time off. Richie knew that'd only make things worse.

It was to seven in the morning the next day when he heard someone banging on his door. Of course, he hadn't slept. He groaned, standing from the couch and setting his now cold coffee on the table. The last thing he wanted was one of his friends checking on him. They'd adopted some sort of schedule to make sure he was okay, but Richie just wanted to be left alone.

Richie opened the door and turned around. This was Bobby's day. Although he was earlier than usual, Richie figured that since their practice yesterday had been especially rough, he'd come early. "Listen Bobby, I don't want to watch the newest seas—"

"Shut it, Tozier." Richie whipped around at the familiar voice. There stood Beverly Marsh and she looked pissed.

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Eddie had managed to find an apartment quickly. He was starting to consider himself pretty lucky at finding apartments. It wasn't the best place, but it wasn't with Myron or Richie and that was good. At least, that's what he kept telling himself.

It took all of his self-control not to call Richie or go over to his apartment. He knew it wouldn't end well. Especially since last time when Richie sang that song then immediately slept with someone else. Of course, he'd fall for Richie. Eddie had thought he was nice, but clearly, he was wrong. Richie had probably just been messing with him the entire time.

He'd been miserable since that night and last week he'd decided he was moving home after his lease was up. At this point it seemed like the best option. At least he had the Losers back home. He'd been putting off telling them. It felt like he'd failed at something. Eddie wasn't sure what he failed at, but it was something. He set his phone down, listening to it ring.

“Eddie!” Bev’s voice came over the speaker. “Is everything okay? You’ve seemed off lately.”

Eddie hadn’t told her about Myron. He hadn’t told any of them. He hadn’t even told them that Richie and he weren’t actually dating. This conversation wasn’t going to go well. He just hoped Bev wouldn’t try to talk him into staying in California.

“Yeah, I just, I wanted to let you know that I’m moving home at the end of the semester.”

There was silence for a moment.

“Why?”

“Well, Richie and I broke up,” Eddie lied. “And it’s just been hard. I don’t feel like I belong out here.”

Eddie was playing with a loose thread on his shirt. He’d tell Bev the truth later. Right now, this was all he could manage. It was the first time he’d said it aloud. It felt wrong, but Eddie didn’t know why. Probably because he was still secretly hoping Richie would show up and convince him to stay. But that wasn’t going to happen.

“I’m sorry,” Bev said gently. “I’m coming out there.” Eddie was about to protest, but Bev was speaking again. “Don’t try and stop me. You’re not packing everything up on your own. You can show me around since it’s my only opportunity.”

Eddie smiled and shook his head. He should have known one of them would try and come here. There was no way they would find out he was moving and not try to help. He was glad it was Bev. Ben and Mike would want to talk about what happened and try to make Eddie feel better, but he wasn’t ready for that. Stan would want to spend most of the time inside packing and that would just lead him to wallow. Bill would get so lost in doing things, they wouldn’t end up packing.

“You can fly back with me at the end and maybe all of us can take a road trip out there! We can rent a moving truck and move you back. It’ll be like the trip we took after high school.”

“Thanks Bev,” Eddie laughed.

They talked for a while and Eddie was grateful they avoided the Richie conversation. When Bev hung up, he felt better. He didn’t feel quite as big of a loser as he did before. He got ready for work, thinking of what they could do when Bev came.

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“Well no wonder you want to move home. This place is depressing,” Bev said.

She took one look around Eddie’s small apartment. It was pretty depressing, but Eddie hadn’t tried to make it better. He knew the minute he moved in he wouldn’t be there long. The month between his phone call with Bev and her arriving had been long enough.

He’d managed to avoid both Myron and Richie, so things weren’t all bad. He’d even stopped hoping Richie would start turning up at the coffee shop. Carla had stopped talking about Richie’s band when she heard what had happened. Eddie refused to listen to Richie’s show knowing it’d just break his heart more.

Bev tossed her bag on the couch and turned to Eddie. “So, are we going to talk about what actually happened?”

A bottle of wine later, Bev was up to speed. She hadn’t said anything judgmental about the fake relationship or about Eddie dating Myron again. Eddie felt like he couldn’t stop talking about it. For months he’d kept it to himself and it was all pouring out.

“Why don’t you talk to Richie?”

Eddie sighed, setting his empty glass down. “Because he doesn’t feel the same way.”

Bev snorted. “Sweetie, I saw you two together. Trust me, he was smitten. And I’m willing to bet anything the girl at his apartment was just a misunderstanding.” Eddie gave her a look of disbelief. “Have you ever stopped to think that maybe Richie thinks you don’t like him?”

That night Eddie didn’t stop thinking about that. He replayed his

time with Richie in his head. Bev had to be wrong. Richie wasn't the type of person to not say what he was thinking. He'd have told Eddie immediately if he liked him. He must have known Eddie liked him. He stayed silent because he didn't want to make it awkward.

The next morning, Eddie could barely keep his eyes open. It was his last day at the coffee shop and he wasn't happy. It was a five am shift. Bev had gone with him, telling him she'd explore the area while he worked. She was in California and she was going to live it up. He made Bev a latte to go and she waved as she walked out the door. Hopefully she didn't run into Richie.

## 14. Chapter 14

“Shut it, Tozier.”

Richie whipped around at the familiar voice. There stood Beverly Marsh and she looked pissed. He didn't have time to process what was happening before Bev kicked the door shut and approached him. She jabbed a finger into his chest. She didn't stop walking until Richie's legs hit the back of the couch and he almost fell over the armrest.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” She yelled. “Do you not remember what I said? You're lucky you're still breathing. I swear to god Richard. Do you know Eddie is moving home? He thinks he failed out here. He'd never admit it but he's heartbroken. And I can guaran-fucking-tee it isn't because of Myles or whatever his name is.”

Richie just stared at her. He was confused for a number of reasons. Mainly why Bev was here in the first place. Shouldn't she be in Maine? If she knew about Myron, she must know Richie and Eddie didn't actually date. There was no reason she should be here.

Wait how was she here? How did she know where Richie lived? Eddie wouldn't have told her. He must have known she'd come here if he did. Richie still wasn't able to speak; it might be one of the first times in his life. He just stared at Bev, gaping.

“Well?”

“Hi?” Richie finally spoke.

“What the actual fuck Richie? Hi? Hi, is all you have to say to me?”

“I don't know what you're talking about. I haven't seen Eddie in months.”

“I'm very much aware of that. Basically, told him you loved him and what? Slept with the first person you saw after that?”

“Jesus, is that what he told you?” Richie shoved her hand away. She took a step back, crossing her arms. “Where do you want me to start?”

The part where I had a major crush on my roommate who basically told me nothing could happen? The same one that asked me to pretend to be his boyfriend? And right when I was ready to accept, I loved him, he told me he wanted to meet up with his ex?

“The ex he later started dating and moved in with? And how I finally said fuck it when I saw him again and told him only for him to run away and come to my apartment to tell me off? Only for him to run away when he saw a girl in my apartment? A girl, mind you, who was running away from a shitty abusive boyfriend and had no where else to go? Where would you like me to start?”

Bev’s eyes didn’t leave Richie. “So, you do love him?”

Richie finally flopped back on the couch. Staring at the ceiling. Well, he finally said it out loud. He never thought he could fall in love with a roommate he fake-dated for two months, but here they were. He was in love with Eddie Kasprak, who didn’t love him back.

“He loves you too you know?” Richie scoffed in disbelief. Bev sat next to him on the couch. “Really. He’s a mess. He thinks you hate him. Like you wanted to be friends and you found out he liked you and freaked.”

Richie finally sat up, giving Bev an incredulous look. She sighed and waited a moment before explaining all the reasons she had for thinking Eddie liked him. Which was great in theory, but now Richie didn’t know what to do. Eddie wasn’t talking to him and he was planning to move home.

“Look I have to go meet Eddie before his shift ends. If I’m not there he’ll think I came looking for you. If you need me, text me,” Bev said standing. She walked to the door and turned around quickly. “What’s something I can say I saw in the area?”

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“I can’t believe you ever want to leave this state,” Bev said, picking her bag up from the floor. “Especially when you’re returning to Derry of all places.”

“I’m not going back to Derry. I’m transferring to the same college as



you, in New York.”

Bev waved her hand, as if telling Eddie, the details didn’t matter. As sad as his apartment had looked when Bev got here, it looked even more depressing. They’d packed up most of his stuff. The only things left were what he was taking back home with him. Everything else he’d get when the Losers came to California on the road trip Bev got them all to agree too.

He bit his thumb nervously. He wasn’t exactly thrilled about returning home but didn’t want to complain considering the absolute shit show his life had become since moving here. Hopefully he’d move home and this last year would feel like a bad dream and Eddie would eventually forget about it.

“You’re not a failure.” Bev’s voice pulled him from his thoughts. “Things didn’t work out, but that’s life.”

“Thanks, Bev.”

Bev was right about California being pretty great. Eddie wished he’d connected with someone out here the way he had with the Losers. Or the way he had with Richie before everything went wrong. He and Bev had had a great time. They tried out a few restaurants and local attractions. They’d even gone out one night, despite Eddie’s better judgment and it’d been one of his favorite nights since moving out to the west coast.

But he hadn’t connected with someone and he wasn’t staying. He couldn’t keep dwelling on it because he’d never get over Richie that way. How pathetic was that? Eddie didn’t want to say anything else to Bev. Every time he brought up Richie, she tried to push the subject. *Have you spoken to him? You should reach out! Maybe he likes you too, Eddie?* Eddie would rather just not deal with it.

The ride to the airport was Bev talking about how she’d discussed it with the Losers and Eddie could stay with any of them for however long he needed. She also had a few people that Eddie could lease from if he wanted his own place. Eddie let her monopolize the conversation, not really wanting to talk. Especially because the closer they got to the airport; the less certain Eddie felt about leaving.

Eventually they were waiting at the gate. Bev had fallen silent at some point but wasn't pushing Eddie to talk. She had her head on his shoulder. Eddie could tell the week had caught up with her and she would be sleeping on the entire ride back.

"Eddie, can I tell you something?" Bev murmured. "You have to promise not to be mad at me."

"As if I could ever be angry with you, Bev."

Bev didn't answer right away. He glanced down at her, making sure she was still awake. She looked like she was trying to figure out how to phrase her next sentence. Eddie had no idea what Bev was going to say. Maybe she'd forgotten something in the cab?

"I went to see Richie." Eddie stiffened. "And—"

"I don't want to hear it," Eddie cut her off. She opened her mouth to respond. "No. I'm over it. I can't keep putting myself in that situation only to have it all fall apart again. I know you were doing it because you thought it would help, so thank you. But I don't want to hear about Richie again."

"What if he was right in front of you?"

## 15. Chapter 15

Eddie's head snapped up, half expecting Richie to be there. But there was no one, just people sitting around waiting for the flight to board. He looked down at Bev. Her eyes were closed. He rolled his eyes, wondering why she'd even bother saying that.

"Well, he's not," Eddie said adamantly, "so I guess we don't have to find out."

"No, I am." Eddie heard someone gasp.

He looked up to see Richie, a very out of breath Richie standing in front of him. Richie's hands were on his knees and he was bent over. Eddie wanted to say something, but he felt like he couldn't. He was just staring at Richie.

"Shit, oh my god. Sorry I was," Richie gasped. "I got stuck behind, the uh, the slowest moving people." Richie was pausing between every few words. He wiped his forehead before standing. "I need to work out more."

Eddie didn't answer. He glanced at Bev who was now sitting up and stretching. She seemed completely unfazed by Richie standing in front of them. She pulled out her phone. Eddie knew she was involved but wasn't sure how.

"Bev, what's going on?"

"I'm sorry," Richie said. "I wanted to be here earlier--"

"Why are you here?" Eddie snapped standing up.

For a moment, it looked like Richie didn't have an answer. He seemed taken aback by Eddie's question, evening taking a step back at Eddie's movement. Eddie didn't care though, he walked closer. If Richie was going to show up at the airport before he left for Derry, he was going to give him answers.

"I wanted to talk to you."

“Oh great! And you decided now would be a good time? Not when we got back from Maine? Or when you basically told me you loved me at your show? Or when I was at your apartment after you slept with some random girl? Or any of the time after that? Was that not a good time to talk to me?”

Eddie knew he was causing a scene. People were turning to look at them. One person had their phone pointed at Eddie, but he didn't care. It was like all the emotions and thoughts he had over the last few months were all coming out.

“First of all, you're the one that decided to get back together with Myron. You're the one that ran out after the show. I tried to find you. I ran after you to explain about Sandy, but you wouldn't stop. And not once did you try and talk to me.”

“I decided to get back with Myron, because you made it abundantly clear nothing between us would happen. I didn't ask you to confess your love for me in front of my boyfriend. I certainly didn't to hear you tell me you meant what you said after you hooked up with someone. And I did try to talk to you, right after I broke up with my boyfriend and you slept with some random girl.”

“It wasn't some random girl, and I didn't sleep with her,” Richie yelled.

It was then Eddie realized the amount of people looking at them. Multiple people had stopped with their luggage and pulled their phones out. The people who'd recently deboarded were all standing, confused. They were going to get security called on them.

“Well then I'm really glad you had a meaningful connecting or reconnection with an important person in your life two hours after you told me you loved me,” Eddie bit out, quietly.

Richie didn't answer right away. Eddie could tell he struck a nerve. The silence in the airport was strange. It felt like everyone in the terminal fell quiet, waiting to see what happened next. Eddie half wished he wasn't at the airport so he could leave.

“Sandy's my ex. The one I lived with before you came.” Richie's voice

was so quiet even Eddie could hardly hear him. But he knew enough about Richie's feelings towards his ex that he wouldn't have slept with her again. "I didn't- "

"I believe you, but that doesn't change anything else."

"We met at my apartment," Richie said. Eddie blinked; not sure what Richie was talking about. "I instantly liked you. You'd pretended you got the day wrong, when I clearly forgot you were coming over. I like to think I asked you out because I'm the one that propose the fake dating shit.

"Our first kiss was in the kitchen. You were being adorably obstinate, and I was being infuriatingly optimistic when you were cooking dinner. I just looked at you and couldn't help but kiss you. And I'm not just reciting something. It took everything in my willpower now to kiss you again."

And that's when Eddie realized Richie was answering all the questions Eddie had prepared him for. The questions he'd said his friends would ask to make sure they weren't fake dating. Richie looked more vulnerable than Eddie had ever seen him. Except for when he was singing in the bar.

"I think you're smart and funny and even when I wanted to get over you, I couldn't. Even now, I don't care that you're yelling at me in the middle of an airport, because just seeing you makes everything else seem so insignificant. I want to spend every day with you, just figuring everything out, yelling at each other in airports, chasing you through the rain, singing you love songs. Because having to do that without you these last few months was miserable."

There was a moment of silence.

"APPROVED," Eddie heard Ben yell.

He spun around to see Bev holding up her phone, face-timing the other Losers. They were all speaking over each other. Even Stan looked like he'd accepted Richie's answers. Bev hit mute after a second, not putting her phone away. People in the airport started talking again, hopefully moving on from the situation.

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“You can be pretty obtuse Eds.” Richie laughed at the face Eddie made. “I was shamelessly flirting with you from the day we met.”

“You can be obtuse too, Dick.” Eddie rolled his eyes. “Wait, how did you get into the airport?”

“I bought a ridiculously expensive one-way ticket to Lebanon. Speaking of which,” Richie looked at Bev, “since this was your plan are you reimbursing me.”

Bev scoffed. “If you had told Eddie how you felt months ago, you wouldn’t have had to buy the ticket.”

Richie flipped her off, looking back at Eddie. “I’m sorry and I know you’re moving back to New York, but I couldn’t let you leave thinking I didn’t love you, because I do.”

“Flight 432 to New York, now boarding.” Eddie didn’t turn away from Richie when the voice came over the speaker. “Flight 432 to New York, now boarding.”

## 16. Chapter 16

Richie stared at the ceiling. He'd done everything he could besides physically drag Eddie through the airport. God the whole day was starting to feel like the finale of Friends. But that wouldn't be so bad. Eddie showing up at his door, despite getting on the plane. Richie felt like he was watching a horrible moving replaying. And he kind of was.

There were videos everywhere of his exchange with Eddie. Richie had watched one in a particularly low and drunk moment after getting back to his apartment. He didn't need to watch it though. He could still hear Eddie saying I'm sorry when they were boarding his section. *Richie, I'm so, so sorry, but I can't do this right now. I've got to go, I've got to...*

And he left, boarded the plane with a cliché backwards glance. Richie felt like someone had knocked the wind out of him. He walked out of the airport, gone to the nearest bar and woke up in his bed the next day with a dead phone and one of the worst headaches of his life.

*Five days.* It'd been five days since Eddie got on the plane. He hadn't heard from him, not that he'd expected to. After watching some of the videos of him and Eddie in the airport, his phone had died and he hadn't felt like charging it. Richie didn't need to be constantly reminded of Eddie and how he messed up.

Richie rolled his eyes and the buzzer going off letting him know someone wanted to be let in. He couldn't deal with his band mates asking him what was wrong. He'd text them all the morning he woke up and told them he wouldn't be able to practice for a while. That didn't stop them from check in on him all them time.

Richie looked around his apartment. It was a disaster, more so than usual. He didn't want to let someone inside, so he slipped on a pair of shoes next to the door. At least he could get some fresh air before going back to his sulking. He opened the door and froze when he saw Eddie jamming his finger repeatedly against the button.

“Open the fucking door you—”

“Eddie?” Richie asked, as if confirming Eddie was actually standing there.

“Did you not hear the buzzer?”

“What are you doing here?”

Eddie scoffed and rolled his eyes. Richie felt like he was dreaming. He blinked and then rubbed his eyes. Eddie’s hair was disheveled, and he had bags under his eyes. He looked almost as bad as Richie felt. There was a suitcase behind him.

“I wanted to talk to you,” Eddie echoed Richie’s words

“I know the feeling,” Richie said harshly. “I see now is a better time for you. So, let’s hear it. Let me guess I embarrassed you in the airport. You’ve gotten back together with some guy in New York and you don’t want me to talk to you anymore.”

Eddie looked up at him, surprised. Richie felt bad saying it. He’d wanted nothing more than to see him the last few days. He wasn’t lying before. Just seeing Eddie again made everything seem okay, like they could figure it out. Richie just wasn’t sure how to do that.

“Fuck you. You’re an idiot, you know that right? I knew that from the second I met you. From when I showed up at your apartment and you were standing there shirtless with your perfect blue eyes and messed up hair. I spent months falling in love with you and you waited until last week to tell me how you felt. I’m sorry it took a minute for me to process.”

Richie tried to interrupt, but Eddie was talking too fast. Richie had rarely seen Eddie like this. In fact, the only time was when he was with the Losers, the people he felt most comfortable with. It was like he stopped caring what he said because he knew they would still love him when he was done. Like he knew Richie would still love him when he was done.

“And our first kiss may have been in the kitchen, but that’s not our *real* first kiss. We never had one because they’ve all been a lie. You’re annoying and loud and make awful jokes. I mean what year is it?



2005! Nobody makes mom jokes anymore.”

Richie rushed forward without thinking about it. His lips crashed against Eddie's. Part of him expected Eddie to shove him away and tell him to go away. Luckily that part of him was wrong. Eddie's hand landed in Richie's hair, the other pulling him closer by his jacket.

“Does that count as our *real* first kiss?” Richie murmured when they finally broke apart.

“I feel like the other one makes a better story.” They fell silent for a moment. “I'm sorry I left. I had to go back. My mom was in the hospital. I know I don't get along with her, but I couldn't just not go. Then I didn't have enough time to explain before boarding. I tried calling, I promise, but I kept going to voicemail.”

“Yeah, my phone was dead.”

“How did you get by without me?”

“It was awful.”

“No shit.”

“Promise you won't leave again?”

Eddie rolled his eyes, not bothering to answer. Richie grabbed Eddie's hand and bag and pulled him inside his building. Richie felt better than he had since they'd gotten back from the Maine. Richie practically dragged Eddie through the door, throwing his suitcase to the side. He picked him up, before kissing him again and walking towards his room.

“I love you,” Eddie whispered when they broke apart again.

“I love you too,” Richie paused, “what the hell am I supposed to tell your mom?”